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FOR 1898.**

**THE THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL ISSUE.**  
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Hongkong, 6th January, 1898. [24]

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**The Daily Press.**

HONGKONG, MARCH 3rd, 1898.

The Director of Public Works stated in the  
debate in the Legislative Council on the  
site of the new Post Office that the resolution  
proposed by him which was carried, did not  
commit the Council to any action. The  
resolution was in fact merely an expression  
of opinion, and if it should be thought that  
opinion was a mistaken one it is not too late  
to alter it. H.E. the Acting Governor  
said that "the Government has been most  
anxious to know the real wish of the  
colony on this subject, because it does not  
affect in one way or the other, but it  
affects the colony for all time, or at least  
for the next sixty or seventy years." As  
a means of ascertaining the real wish of the  
colony it might be advisable to invite  
an expression of opinion on the subject  
from the Chamber of Commerce, which  
is a sufficiently representative body to  
give weight to any opinion expressed by  
a decisive majority of its members. The  
unofficial members of the Legislative  
Council are divided in opinion and the  
Government therefore cannot derive  
much assistance from that quarter. We  
have on the one side Mr. CHATER and  
Mr. WHITEHEAD, and on the other Mr.  
BELLIOS, Mr. BELL-IRVING, Dr. HO KAI,  
and Mr. WEI YUK. Imputations of interest-  
ed motives have unfortunately been thrown  
out as between some of these gentlemen.  
While we do not believe that any one of  
them would consciously allow his judgment  
to be influenced by his individual interests  
the fact may be taken note of for what  
it is worth that Mr. WHITEHEAD is the only  
one who is uninterested in property. If it be  
granted that some of the remainder might  
benefit by the removal of the Post Office  
it must also be granted that others would  
equally benefit by its retention on the  
present site. In the long run we do not think  
it would make much difference to any of  
them, but we should think it would be  
a satisfaction to the Government, especially  
in view of Mr. P. T. COKE's remarks,  
to have an expression of opinion from a  
representative body suffice by numerous  
its membership to meet any possible  
bias arising from individual interests.

So far the subject has not received  
that amount of consideration and public  
discussion which its importance deserves.  
When Mr. OMARU's scheme was launched  
we expressed our approval of it. Like  
General BLACK, however, we are interested  
only in seeing the best scheme  
adopted, and as a contribution to the  
discussion we propose to allude to one or two  
points that have not hitherto been mentioned.  
We offer them simply for what  
they are worth and without expressing any  
further opinion upon the rival schemes as  
a whole. In the first place, in a city over

four miles in length a difference of a couple of  
hundred yards one way or the other cannot  
make much difference in the relative con-  
trary of the respective sites under discus-  
sion. We have to consider also not only  
absolute centrality as determined by hor-  
izontal lines but also accessibility. As soon as  
the Praya Reclamation is completed we will  
have a tramway running along the whole  
length of the old Praya, turning into Queen's Road by the Cricket Ground, con-  
tinuing along Queen's Road to Arsenal  
Street, and thence running along Praya  
East to East Point and in course of time  
no doubt to Shaukiwan. The stream of  
traffic will follow the line of the train-  
way and the proposed Praya site for the  
Post Office will be in at least as close  
touch with the tramway as the present site.  
The Colonial Treasurer in the course of the  
debate in Council said the residents of  
Kowloon ought to be considered and he  
suggested that the present site would be  
more convenient for them. We should  
have thought the Praya site would have been  
preferred by the Kowloonites, as it would  
be as near the wharf as the existing site  
and the road to it would be more  
agreeable. But if Kowloon should be  
considered as should the East Point  
and Wan Chai districts, which are  
handsome buildings could be erected.  
The subject is still in the debatable  
stage and as the Government professedly  
wishes the wishes of the community  
and not yet taken any effective  
steps, we would suggest a refer-  
ence to the Chamber of Commerce, and we  
would suggest that the Committee of  
the Chamber of Commerce call a general meeting  
of the public to pronounce upon the  
matter. We do not wish to be  
engaged in condemning Mr.  
OMARU's scheme (of which we expressed  
our approval when it was launched), but  
we think that before being finally adopted  
the scheme requires much more careful  
and general consideration than it has yet  
received, and it is for the purpose of  
promoting discussion that we have ventured  
to offer our arguments that seem to tell  
against the scheme. Our columns are open  
to any one who has any ideas to offer on the  
subject, but we would request correspondents  
to argue the question on its own merits  
and not with reference to any bearing it may  
be presumed to have on the supposed in-  
terests of Mr. CHATER, or Mr. BELLIOS,  
or any one else except the community as  
a whole.

The question of cost is in a somewhat  
hazy condition, but as the difference  
is not very considerable, and as the  
colony is not in a poverty stricken condition,  
the choice ought not to be determined  
solely by considerations of economy.  
We are building for posterity, and  
what that would be most valuable if it  
were obtainable would be that of the  
residents of the colony fifty years hence  
given in the light of the conditions  
then obtaining. But as we cannot obtain  
the opinion of posterity we must form our  
own opinion in the light of past experience.  
Those who have been resident in the colony  
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the Chinese steadily pressing eastward and  
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